

PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Madison, Wisconsin -- Erik C. Peterson, United States Attorney for the Western District of Wisconsin, announced that Stephen J. Barthold, 44, of Forest Lake, Minn., was sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Barbara B. Crabb to a term of 31 months in federal prison, to be followed by two years of supervised release, for conspiracy to transport in interstate commerce falsely made, forged, altered, and counterfeited securities. Barthold pleaded guilty to this charge on October 19, 2007.

The conspiracy took place during the period from August 17, 2005 to September 27, 2005. As part of the conspiracy, Barthold obtained checks that had been stolen from the mail. He traveled from Minnesota to Wisconsin to pass some of the stolen checks, and used account information from some of the stolen checks to create falsely-made and counterfeit checks.

Barthold used stolen checks to make the counterfeit checks while staying at a motel in Balsam Lake. He also created false identification documents in the names of the drawers of the checks to facilitate his negotiation of the counterfeit checks. He then used the stolen checks and counterfeit checks to purchase goods and services from merchants. Barthold passed forged checks at businesses in Polk County, Barron

County, Marathon County, and elsewhere.

The charges against Barthold were the result of an investigation by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, Polk County Sheriff's Department, and the St. Croix Falls Police Department. The prosecution of this case has been handled by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert A. Anderson.

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